THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) to (c) In pursuance of the Common Minimum Programme, State Education Ministers and State Education Secretaries discussed the proposal to make free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right in a Conference held on 9-10 August, 1996. The Conference has recommended constitution of a committee under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of State for Education to consider the financial, administrative, legal and academic implications of the proposal.

The question of mobilising funds for this purpose would arise after the Committee has considered the financial implications of the proposal.

Steps to Control Air Pollution in Tamil Nadu

2678. SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Central Pollution Control Board to arrest air pollution caused by more than 50 industries in Sipcot, Ranipet in Tamil Nadu; and

(b) the reasons for not cancelling the licences of these industries despite the emission of noxious gases by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) and (b) As per the provisions of Section 17 of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the action is required to be taken by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and not by the Central Pollution Control Board.

Restriction on Trade in Agricultural Commodities

2679. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of liberalisation policy in vogue there are many restrictions on domestic and foreign trade in agricultural commodities, including seeds which are against the interests of the farmers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action Government propose to take to remove these restrictions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are quantitative restrictions on agricultural commodities for foreign trade and inter-zone and inter-state restrictions on the movement and storage of foodgrains in some States. These are no restrictions on domestic trade of seed for sowing and planting purposes. As regards foreign trade the import and export of seed is regulated in accordance with the provisions of EXIM Policy 1992—97 subject to the fulfilment of the provisions of New Policy on Seed Development, 1988 PFS Order, 1989 and Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and flora and taking into consideration the domestic requirements and the commercial interests of the country.

(c) In the regime of liberalisation, the trade policy review is a continuous process and the prime objective is to safeguard the interests of both farmers and consumers.

Production and Procurement of Paddy in Punjab

2680. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: